

FirstNet conducts initial in-person meeting with single points of contact (SPOCs) from states, territories

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[FirstNet](#) yesterday concluded its first in-person meeting with the single points of contact (SPOCs) from throughout the nation, and the feedback was great enough that another such event likely will be conducted during the latter part of this year, according to FirstNet Acting Executive Director TJ Kennedy.

More than 125 representatives attended the event, including SPOCs, key associates and eight tribal representatives, Kennedy said. The two-day event featured presentations from FirstNet and state representatives on a variety of topics related to the deployment of the proposed nationwide public-safety broadband network.

“It was more than a meeting,” Kennedy said during a press conference call after the event. “It really was an exchange of ideas, feedback, progress reports, sharing of best practices on a host of issues related to state and territory coordination—everything from planning with FirstNet for the network to future implementation.”

Some of the key topics covered during the event included information about FirstNet’s public-notice process, data collection, planning-grant usage and elements of the state plans that will be developed through consultations between FirstNet and each state or territory, according to Amanda Hilliard, FirstNet’s director of outreach. In addition, FirstNet board members Kevin McGinnis and Jim Douglas gave presentations on the FirstNet’s impact on EMS and how SPOCs should work with governors, respectively.

“Every session went the full amount of time, and we probably could have gone longer in every session,” Hilliard said. “I was just pleased that there was really high interest from all of the participants. There was a lot of excitement and a lot of feedback, so we need to continue to do these kinds of meetings.”

Kennedy echoed this sentiment and said he would like to have another in-person SPOC

meeting this year.

“I think we’re going to try to go for two a year, rather than one a year, based upon the kind of really good feedback that we received,” he said. “Also, I think it’s important [to note that] we just finished at 5:30 p.m. Eastern time, and the room was packed. We had people still participating after two full days, and these are people from all over the country who need to travel back home and typically have other job duties they are responsible for. That participation shows how important these conversations are.

“I’m going to work with the team to shoot for another one of these in the fall.”

Meanwhile, FirstNet will continue communications with SPOCs via monthly conference calls and quarterly webinars. But the value of conducting an in-person event was evident during the past two days, as state representatives were able to talk with FirstNet officials and their peers from other jurisdictions in formal sessions, as well as informally during breaks in the program, Kennedy said.

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